DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 175 162 EA 012 086

AUTHOR Pendergast, David M.; And Others
TITLE The A.R.C. Workshop: Building Awareness Readiness and Commitment.
SPONS AGENCY Michigan State Dept. of Education, Lansing.
PUB DATE Apr 79
NOTE 24p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association (San Francisco, California, April 8-12, 1979); Tables 2 and 3 may not reproduce clearly

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Elementary Secondary Education; *Inservice Education; Inservice Programs; *Professional Training; *Staff Improvement; *Team Training; *Workshops
IDENTIFIERS *Facilitator Training

ABSTRACT

This paper discusses the structure and process of an A.R.C. workshop, an innovative approach to inservice training. Following a general introduction, including impacts on workshop participants, the paper details four basic components of a workshop: (1) the opening session, (2) examining readiness for professional development, (3) exploring awareness of factors influencing student learning, and (4) establishing commitment for professional development. An explanation of the workshop conclusion, which involves the administration and scoring of the A.R.C. instrument, follows. The end of the paper explores the theoretical foundations and value assumptions of an A.R.C. workshop as well as the facilitator training program. (Author/LD)

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SYMPOSIUM: PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND CURRICULUM CHANGE: PRECONDITIONS TO EFFECTIVE EFFORT

THE A.R.C. WORKSHOP: BUILDING AWARENESS READINESS AND COMMITMENT[1]

David M. Pendergast, Stephen B. Hillman, Ronald V. Urick

Wayne State University

Detroit, Michigan 48202

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Paper presented at the
American Educational Research Association
Annual Meetings
San Francisco, California
April, 1979

[1]Support for this project was made available by the Michigan State Department of Education.

EA 012 086

THE A.R.C. WORKSHOP: BUILDING AWARENESS READINESS AND COMMITMENT

INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

The A.R.C. Workshop approach to staff and curriculum development is a major departure from conventional inservice training practice. Because the A.R.C. approach is innovative in structure as well as content, it is essential to explain the processes of this training, and of course to explore the values and theoretical assumptions underlying the workshop.

The A.R.C. workshop is designed as a twelve hour intensive experience, consisting of four 3-hour sessions conducted on two consecutive days. Prior to the scheduled sessions, participants organize themselves as teams. Each team consists of at least four classroom teachers and one administrator with responsibilities for curriculum. The workshop may be modified to be conducted with departmental staffs or with the total professional staff of a given school building.

The A.R.C. workshop is organized into four basic components: (1) the opening session, (2) examining readiness for professional development, (3) exploring awareness of factors influencing student learning, and (4) establishing commitment for professional development. We will delve into each of these sessions in detail later in the paper, and take a look at the workshop conclusion, which involves the administration and scoring of the A.R.C. instrument.

The A.R.C. workshop, when implemented effectively, impacts on workshop participants in the following ways:

(a) It establishes an awareness of relationships between characteristics and conditions of human learning, improved student performance in schools, and the professional development of school staffs.

(b) It stimulates readiness for involvement in professional development activities which show promise of improved student learning.

(c) It elicits a commitment of time and effort to engage in systematic programs of professional development.

OPENING SESSION

The opening session of the A.R.C. workshop establishes group structures and relationships. Here, too, participants examine their expectations for the training in relation to the A.R.C. workshop goals. Needless to say, this opening session is critical to the operation of the workshop, providing stimulation to "forge ahead" with clear-cut objectives.

The participant does not arrive at the workshop like Wendy into Never-Never Land. Besides having formed teams, the participants have some basic ideas as to what awaits! They have been given a "background sheet." This background sheet explains the basic assumptions of the workshops, relates these assumptions to the workshop goals, and further, states the behavioral norms which will be supported by the workshop facilitators during the event.

Briefly, the participants will know beforehand that the basic assumption of the A.R.C. workshop is: Effective professional staff development must rest on a foundation of awareness, readiness, and commitment. The participants will have had the opportunity to read over and digest the goals of the workshop, which focus upon (1) assessing the current readiness of a school team to engage in staff development, (b) identifying instructional variables having significant impact upon student learning, (c) specifying appropriate teaching behaviors to impact upon student learning, and (d) developing a plan for systematic staff development. Behavioral norms on the background sheet are (a) sensitivity to individual differences among school team members, (b) high levels of participation and involvement in workshop activities (this is not a passive, didactic workshop), (c) encouragement to experiment with new and/or different ideas, (d) responsibility for participants to meet their individual learning needs and (e) open sharing of thoughts and feelings.

So...the participant has read his background sheet and comes into the opening session of the A.R.C. workshop. Some participants will be proverbially "bright-eyed and bushy-tailed." Others, quite predictably, may be unsure, muttering something about being back in the classroom. To begin the workshop "officially," facilitators share a few introductory remarks about the A.R.C. goals, processes and behavioral norms expected during the workshop. At this time, each

participant is asked to choose a partner, someone who is not a member of the same school team. (The sets of partners chosen here will work together throughout the workshop.) After choosing partners, the participants are given their first task; to discuss individual expectations for professional development in the A.R.C. workshop, going "one-on-one" with partners. Special attention is given to the background sheet at this point. Next, school teams convene to pool the variety of expectations emerging from these partnerships. These expectations are quickly listed on newsprint and posted about the room. Typical examples are listed in Table I. Workshop facilitators react to these lists, relating these ideas to the expectations of the workshop staff.

TABLE I

SAMPLE PARTICIPANT EXPECTATIONS TAKEN FROM AN ACTUAL A.R.C. WORKSHOP

- To develop a unity of staff effort toward satisfying a a priority, mutual concern,
- To improve communication among staff-administration.
- To develop some carryover of "working together" behavior applicable to our classrooms,
- To learn methods which would enable the staff to work more cohesively,
- To look at our feelings about school situation openly,
- How to work in a positive fashion with my co-workers to improve the learning and working environment at (School X).

The formation of this "working partnership" and the sharing within school teams are two essential elements basic to the operation of the workshop.

EXAMINING READINESS OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Through the group structures (partnerships and school teams) established in the opening session, participants engage in an assessment and diagnosis of their school climate in the second component of the A.R.C. workshop, "Examining Readiness." A training instrument called "Characteristics of School Life" (COSL) is completed by each participant. This instrument enables one to relate current organizational norms to professional staff development. Facilitators give a brief explanatory lecturette, providing a point of view on organizational readiness and supplying information on scoring and interpretation of COSL. With partners, an individual profile of school climate is plotted and the data is interpreted by the participants.

Once more, following the partnership task, school teams convene to share the garnered information and to develop a collective picture of school life, or a school life profile. The school teams are asked to respond to this profile, relating it to readiness for professional development, through the following questions:

(a) on the basis of the team profile, what can be said about the team's readiness?

(b) What needs to be done to increase the team's readiness to engage in professional staff development activity?

(c) Given the current state of readiness (from "a") what are some possible next steps to increase readiness?

(d) What obstacles need to be overcome in order to increase readiness?

Each school team presents its analysis to the total workshop. Finally, facilitators summarize the activity. Participants are asked to hold on to the "analysis of readiness" for use in the action planning segment on "commitment".

EXPLORING AWARENESS OF FACTORS INFLUENCING STUDENT LEARNING

"Exploring awareness" is a "two-part feature" during this third session of the A.R.C. workshop. During the first part, attention is focussed on research findings from the study of human learning in schools (Bloom, 1976). The second part emphasizes the use of varying teaching styles, under conditions of different patterns of student aptitude and motivation (Hersey, Blanchard, 1977).

The first segment begins with a brief introduction in which facilitators establish a psychological set emphasizing the importance for educators to attend to knowledge about learning emerging from research. (The A.R.C. Project, while relying upon Bloom as a primary source for the workshop, does not maintain a posture of advocacy in relation to Bloom's mastery learning theory.). The central message in this introduction is that careful and continuing consideration of research is an important and useful professional responsibility.

Participants now rank order a list of instructional variable taken from Bloom's Quality of Instruction segment of the mastery learning theory. The facilitators, incidentally, give no input at this point. The school teams discuss these variables, to consider meaning of the statements and to support "sharing and airing" of similarities and differences within school teams. Now the facilitator gives a lecturette explaining the rank ordering of these variables from Bloom's research. No further processing is done. Workshop partners get together,

relating real instructional problems to four of the Quality of Instruction variables. The primary purpose of this activity is to present Bloom's Quality of Instruction variables as a conceptual model for analyzing instructional situations and making instructional decisions. (The Awareness component, part B, of the A.R.C. instrument, evaluates this activity.) During these partnership sessions, the facilitator's role is not unlike that of a good newspaper reporter; that is, the facilitator tries to get a general sense of the scope and tone of the problems...the facilitator attempts to become aware of the degree to which the participants note the absence of student variables in the theory ...and finally, the facilitator, while harkening to specifics, is always aware of the ambiance.

This session's second part builds upon the aforementioned Quality of Instruction variables. Role-playing and focussed observation are used to concentrate attention upon the relationship between instructional style and student characteristics. (Briefly, we define "instructional style" as patterns of teachers' "task" and relationship" behaviors." "Student characteristics" refers to student aptitude and motivational behaviors.)

The facilitators "take the stage" in two role-play vignettes. Participants identify student behaviors as noted above and identify elements of teacher style. The school teams convene to share observations of student motivation and aptitude behaviors from each of the role-play situations.

They also attempt to "name" outstanding teacher behaviors which they have observed. Facilitators provide a brief lecturette, drawing attention to teaching styles as related to student aptitude/motivation patterns. The school teams then prepare and present role-play situations with one another. These are to illustrate four plausible teacher style/student characteristic relationships. If there is time and energy, participants may be asked to devise instructional designs based on specific objectives, employing the situational theory described in the lecturette. Facilitators are available for direct consultation as well as to get a sense of whether or not appropriate choices are being made. During this activity, participants have been provided with a clear-cut conceptual model for making choices from among four teaching styles, based on appropriateness to patterns of student ability and willingness to learn specific tasks. This is reflected in the Awareness Component, part C of the A.R.C. instrument.

ESTABLISHING COMMITMENT FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Establishing Commitment, the last major section of the workshop, is directed toward the development of a specific plan of action to be undertaken by the school teams. The intent is to encourage down-to-earth, practical plans based upon analysis of data from the COSL school profile. In addition, and most importantly, these plans must emerge from the individual's sense of commitment...commitment to become

involved in staff development activity.

Workshop participants react to a series of statements about involvement in professional development activities (Dialog Guide for Commitment) indicating their willingness to be involved. With workshop partners they share and clarify their responses to the "Dialog Guide" in preparation for a final school team meeting. The tasks of this team meeting are to

(a) Develop a list of professional development activities the team is willing to engage in,

(b) Describe specific professional development plans, and

(c) Publish a report form (one copy for the team; one for facilitator).

This commitment portion of the A.R.C. workshop is designed to permit individuals to explore their willingness to become active in systematic professional development. Further, it encourages participants to share this sense of commitment with others in their work setting. This final session rests upon the belief that commitment to a concept is related to one's capacity to affirm their position with significant others on their school team. This portion is evaluated directly in the commitment segment of the A.R.C. instrument.

A.R.C. INSTRUMENT: ADMINISTRATION, SCORING, DEBRIEFING

The completion of the A.R.C. Instrument is the final event of the workshop. Participants individually

(a) Respond to each item on A.R.C. instrument,

(b) Score their instrument with facilitator's direction, and

(c) Record the scores on data sheets.

Then in the school team, participants:

(a) Share individual data,

(b) Determine summative data for the school team,

(c) Compare team data to norms,

(d) Discuss action plans for professional development in the light of A.R.C. data and modify, expand or redirect plans as needed.

The workshop is then completed with a brief closing activity to reaffirm a sense of commitment and to establish a sense of "commencement."

THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS AND VALUE ASSUMPTIONS OF THE A.R.C. WORKSHOP

Several assumptions operate throughout the A.R.C. workshop. These assumptions are that:

--the most impactful learning occurs when learners (workshop participants) become highly involved in direct experiences instead of vicarious experiences provided through didactic instructional approaches.

--the likelihood of effecting positive growth in organizations (schools) is increased when professional development activities are designed to take account of systemic or group context instead of focusing exclu-

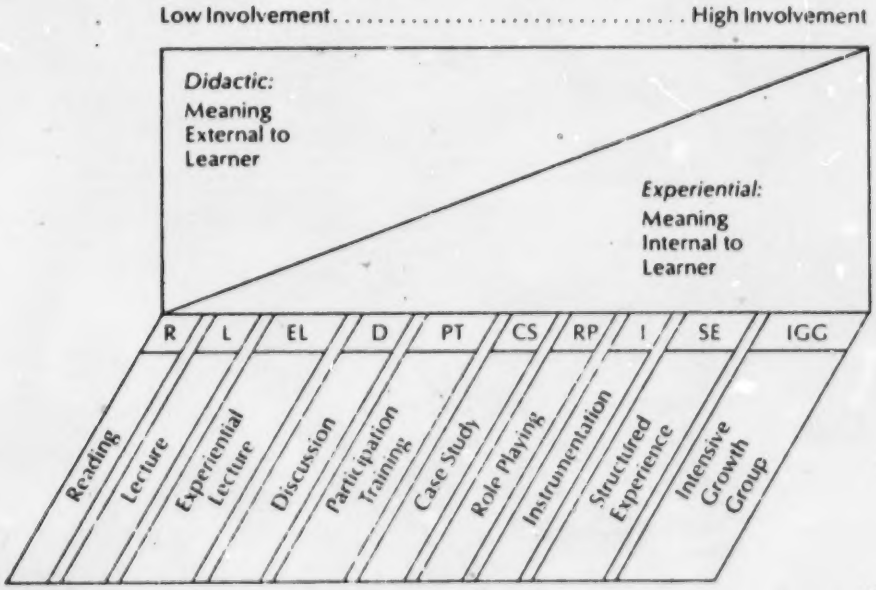
sively upon individuals' growth and development. Individuals develop in the context of developing systems (Egan & Cowan, 1977).

--potentially threatening material may be effectively handled by allowing individuals to approach these materials by incrementally raising the "risk level".

--choice is a basic underlying variable in both individual and organization development. Through collection and feedback of relevant data, more choice becomes available to the organization, and to the individual. Hence, better decisions can be made.

To maximize these assumptions, the A.R.C. workshop draws heavily upon technology from human relations training. The following graphic model depicts this technolcgy.

THE TECHNOLOGY OF HUMAN RELATIONS TRAINING



Notice how the A.R.C. processes and structures tend toward the high involvement, experiential end of the model (Pfeiffer &

Jones, 1977).

The use of partnerships and school teams is considered an approximation of intensive growth groups. Instruments are provided for use by these groupings in assessing and diagnosing their school. Although necessary short lectures are included, their use is deliberately minimized and wherever feasible "experiential lectures" are employed.

The consistent use of school teams for assessment and decision-making activities provides a group context. In order to allow potentially threatening content to be approached step-by-step, individuals share data with partners (neutral party) before relating the data within the school team. To facilitate choice based upon collection and feedback of relevant data, several instruments and procedures are used, for example, the COSL instrument, and its subsequent procedures for handling of the data. The A.R.C. instrument itself can become useful, relevant data for planning staff development programs beyond the A.R.C. workshop experience. The use of a "public declaration" of commitment within the context of a work group--the school team--heightens the likelihood of action beyond the workshop and increases individual as well as the group 'psychological ownership' of planned activity.

A.R.C. FACILITATOR TRAINING

The process of facilitator training must be examined in order for the reader to fully understand the A.R.C. workshop. A three-day facilitator training program was designed and

advertised among educators throughout the state of Michigan.

Persons selected to participate in the A.R.C. facilitator training workshops were chosen by the project staff on the basis of the staff's best judgement as to the following personal qualities and skills. The facilitators of the A.R.C. workshop should possess:

1. The ability to organize and deliver a complex workshop,
2. A high level of personal energy in conducting a workshop,
3. Confidence when interacting with participants,
4. A high level of interpersonal empathy and trust,
5. Competence in attending and responding to individuals and/or group needs in a workshop setting,
6. The ability to work cooperatively and collaborately in planning and implementing training events,
7. A positive disposition toward the relatedness of theory to practice,
8. The ability to articulate new ideas to workshop participants.

The facilitator training was conducted by the designers of the A.R.C. workshop, after the workshop had been pilot-tested and revised. It was very clear to them that a primary guiding principle was to model as closely as possible the kind of facilitator behaviors believed to be most functional to the success of an A.R.C. workshop.

Two segments of the actual workshop, the "Opening Session" and the A.R.C. instrument were conducted by the facilitator

trainers, partly to accomplish with trainees the same purposes as with an A.R.C. workshop and also to model the processes. Following the opening session, the A.R.C. instrument was administered and scored to provide trainees with an experiential foundation for understanding of the basic concepts and processes of the A.R.C. workshop. This laid the foundation for a brief lecturette in which the basic A.R.C. concepts were delineated and related to the agenda and flow of the A.R.C. workshop. The remainder of the training workshop involved going through each of the four segments of the A.R.C. workshop twice in such a manner that each facilitator team (formed during the opening session) would have the experience of preparing for and implementing all four segments of the workshop. This was accomplished through the "Cycling Process" described in Tables II and III.

TABLE II

ARC Trainer's Workshop Agenda

Day 1		Day 2		Day 3	
1:30-2:15	Openers/Expectations	8:45-9:00	Housekeeping	8:45-9:00	Housekeeping
2:15-3:45	ARC Instrument	9:00-12:00	Cycle I	9:00-10:45	Cycle II
4:00-4:30	Basic Concepts/Process of ARC	12:00-2:00	Lunch	10:45-11:30	Co-facilitating
4:30-7:00	Supper	2:00-3:45	Cycle I	11:30-1:00	Lunch (check out)
7:00-7:30	Overview of Training Practice Cycles	3:45-5:00	Preparation time for Cycle II	1:00-3:00	Administrivia
7:30-9:30	Preparation time for Cycle I	5:00-7:00	Supper	3:00-3:30	Open staff meeting
9:40-10:00	Open staff meeting	7:00-10:00	Cycle II		
		10:00-10:20	Open staff meeting		

TABLE III

Prep. Time	CYCLE I		CYCLE II	
Day 1 8:00-10:00 p.m.	Work with partner to prepare to conduct walk through of one segment of ARC workshop--be sure to do "role play" for Awareness/Application		Day 2 4:00-5:00 p.m.	Work with partner to prepare to conduct walk through of one segment of ARC workshop--be sure to do "role play" for Awareness/Application
Day 2 9:00-9:45 9:45-10:00	Round 1	- 1a Conducts "Readiness" participants--1b, 2a, 2b - Critique	Day 2 7:00-7:45 7:45-8:00	Round 1 - 2a Conducts "Readiness" participants--1a, 1b, 2b - Critique
Day 2 10:00-10:45 10:45-11:00	Round 2	- 2a Conducts "Awareness/ Knowledge" participants--1a, 1b, 2b - Critique	Day 2 8:00-8:45 8:45-9:00	Round 2 - 1a Conducts "Awareness/ Knowledge participants--1b, 2a, 2b - Critique
Day 2 11:00-12:00 1:00-2:30 2:30-2:45	Round 3	- 1b Conducts "Awareness/ Application" participants--1a, 2a, 2b - Critique	Day 2 9:00-10:00 (pm) Day 3 9:00-9:30 (am) 9:30-9:45	Round 3 - 2b Conducts "Awareness/ Application participants--1a, 1b, 2a - Critique
Day 2 2:45-3:30 3:30-3:45	Round 4	- 2b Conducts "Commitment" participants--1a, 1b, 2a - Critique	Day 3 9:45-10:30 10:30-10:45	Round 4 - 1b Conducts "Commitment" participants--1a, 2a, 2b - Critique

During the implementation of the cycles, the facilitator trainers placed themselves in the role of consultant to the trainee teams. Each team had time to prepare for implementation of a workshop segment using the "Facilitator's Manual" as their basic source of direction. All materials needed to implement the workshop were available to facilitator teams. Following the preparation period, the teams implemented as much of each A.R.C. segment as possible with a small group of facilitators. After implementing a segment, a "critique" was conducted by the trainers with facilitator trainees. These sessions focussed upon "trouble shooting" various components of the A.R.C. workshop. Some improvements on specific details in the workshop emerged from the critique sessions. This process appeared to provide trainees with a strong sense of ownership of the workshop.

Mid-way through the Cycling Process (following Cycle I) the facilitator trainers interviewed each trainee on an individual basis to ascertain the trainee's commitment to the concepts and processes of the A.R.C. workshop and his/her sense of willingness to conduct an A.R.C. workshop with his/her partner. In cases where there were doubts about any part of this commitment adjustments were made by the trainers.

FUNDAMENTAL ASSUMPTIONS OF THE A.R.C. FACILITATOR TRAINING PROGRAM

The theoretical foundations and fundamental values characterizing the A.R.C. workshop itself were imbedded in the A.R.C. facilitator training. Beyond those basic notions there were other critical factors that governed the conceptualization and implementation of the facilitator training. These are expressed here as beliefs held by the A.R.C. project staff.

The substantive, content elements of the A.R.C. workshop, awareness "knowledge", awareness"application", readiness, and commitment, could have been acquired by facilitators through basically didactic methods. The structural and process dimensions of the A.R.C. workshop, derived from organization development and human relations training necessitated facilitator training techniques which nurtured the beliefs of the project staff.

1. Co-facilitation is superior to one person directing a workshop. This is particularly true in workshops which are oriented toward self and organization diagnosis and group problem solving and decision making. (Pfeiffer and Jones, 1975)

Co-facilitation is the sharing of responsibility for planning and conducting training and development events. There are many advantages to co-facilitation in implementing training and development events which were particularly relevant to A.R.C. When highly emotional situations arise in a group it is tremendously helpful to have one person available to deal

directly with these heightened affects while the other maintains the flow of activities. This is especially valuable during the Readiness and Commitment segment of the workshop. Co-facilitators can be deliberately selected to complement each other in terms of style, experiences and background. One way participants learn in groups is by studying facilitators as behavioral models. Co-facilitating provides two models of individuals coping with their own life situations. The interaction between the co-facilitators gives participants a way to guage dyadic relationships. The likelihood that the training will transfer to participants' back-home, everyday situations is increased.

2. Facilitators with a style preference for using experiential learning techniques are needed to support staff development which is "adaptive" in nature rather than "adoptive". The A.R.C. workshop is clearly an adaptive organizational intervention. (Sashkin, 1974)

   Models for inducing change within an organization may have different orientations. Some that are concerned with producing specific change might be labeled <u>adoptive</u> models. Others oriented toward producing "changingness", a generalized state conducive to change, may be called <u>adaptive</u> models. (Sashkin, 1974, p. 209)

The A.R.C. training is clearly directed toward encouraging a

setting of "changingness" within the school staffs who participate. Sashkin's discussion supports the A.R.C. staffs contention that the roles of trainers in the adaptive models are necessarily process and experiential training oriented. Hence there is a strong emphasis on teaching decision-making and problem-solving techniques with workshop participants through direct experience. While the A.R.C. workshop itself is adaptive in nature, the training of facilitators was adoptive in its intent.

3. Careful consideration to sequences, timing, group development and the "flow" of workshop activities are critical in supporting participants as they proceed toward accomplishing the objectives of the A.R.C. workshop.

The A.R.C. workshop in general proceeds from assessment and diagnosis (readiness) to action planning (commitment). Within the various segments of the workshop the development of ideas moved from individual, to partners, to the school team. Facilitators were trained specifically to take these into account and to provide linkages which sustained the overall flow and evolution of the A.R.C. experience.

4. The most effective facilitators are those who bring a strong sense of psychological ownership and a high degree of energy (both physical and psychological) to the task of modeling the basic workshop concepts, structures, and behavioral norms.

The intensive team building activities between members of facilitator teams (co-facilitating inventory) and the process of preparing to deliver each workshop segment followed by a critique served to heighten the level of psychological ownership within facilitator teams. Critique sessions served as an opportunity to trouble-shoot the workshop materials and processes as well as providing facilitators an opportunity for feedback on their style and techniques. In essence, the facilitator trainers modeled the behavioral norms of the A.R.C. workshop by engaging trainees in those behaviors.

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